

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, May 6. 1708.

I Receiv'd a Letter sign'd in my own Name, a Counterfeit no doubt, for I am fully satisfy'd no Man owns the Name justly, nor does any Man covet to be call'd after the Unfortunate— However, as I am not asham'd of the Name, and hope I have no Reason, I am content to be mock'd at the Pleasure of the Party ; but this let them take by the Way with them, that tho' I am not asham'd of the Relation of any honest Man, yet I should be heartily asham'd of being related to any Man, however Great, who had so far degenerated from Justice and Honour, as to own the Principles in that Letter, and who flies in the Face of the late King, the present Constitution, the QUEEN, the Succession, and all the United Building of Britain's present Government.

However, I spoke something in that Paper to a Part of the Letter which concerns the present Confinement of the Gentlemen now Prisoners in Scotland, and the extraordinary Law made this last Parliament, for suspending the *Habeas Corpus Act*, so far as it relates to them.

In all Cases of such a Nature, where any Persons are fallen under the Displeasure of the Government, it has been my Way never to push on the publick Resentments, the Law is apt enough to push on it self; Justice has Iron Hands, tho' it has Leaden Wings, and I am never for encreasing Men's Afflictions; the Guilty no doubt have enough to grapple with, the Innocent have enough to support them; GOD forbid, I should add to the Burthen of Either, were they

they the worst Men in the World, much less while they are Persons of Honour and Quality, uncondemn'd and unexamin'd, and only taken up by Way of Precaution. But what I shall speak, shall at present relate to the Circumstances of their Confinement, more than to the Persons confin'd.

I shall not pretend to suppose, nor is it supposed even by the Government, that on Examination every Person confin'd shall appear Guilty, and GOD forbid I should think so; no question there may be some that are only number'd with the Transgressors, and who suffer for having been found in bad Company—Nay I persuade my self, that every Roman Catholick is neither in this Design, or did so much as with its Success; I have nothing to say here, nor is it the Business of this Paper to dispute, what Men are led to merely by Principles of Religion; but this I know, there are many Gentlemen of the Roman Faith in this Island, who being able to judge rightly of their Interest as *Britains*, and the Interest of their Families, who have Estates to lose, or rather to save, are so sensible it is their true Interest to preserve the publick Peace, and how deep Sufferers they should be in all Attempts against that; however they might be pleased to have their own Religion advanc'd, yet can never be brought to wish for it, with all the Circumstances of Blood, Confusion and Disorder, which must necessarily follow the Attempt—And therefore I cannot believe even every Roman Catholick in this Design, I am also fully persuaded, and abundantly hopeful, that some of the Roman Catholick Gentlemen, now under Confinement, will appear to be of this Number, being Men of Honour, Estates, Experience and Sense; but of that hereafter. Much more shall I hope, that such Gentlemen among them, who have been always zealous for the Protestant Interest, and the present Presbyterian Government, that have been formerly in the like Circumstances, and in the same Place for opposing the very Party they are now suspected to assist; I say, I cannot but hope, that such as these shall on their farther Examination appear Innocent; for I cannot but believe, I shall always be able to say, in Answer to

the vile Suggestions of a Party among us, that tho' many of the Presbyterian Party oppos'd the Union, not one of them were concern'd in the Invasion—As to who they are, that are most to be suspected had a Hand in this vile Design, I shall hint at that afterward.

But now, Gentlemen, after I have suggested all this, as to the Innocence of the Gentlemen confin'd, and do heartily say, as a *Charity due to Men in Distress*, GOD send them a good Deliverance; yet the Circumstances of their respective Cases abundantly justify her Majesty and the Government in their Conduct, in this Affair of their Imprisonment, and that is my next Article.

For when I say, I hope many of them will appear Innocent, I do no way suppose, the present Circumstances consider'd, that all of them might not be justly render'd suspected; some by Family, some by Principles, some by Practices, having been known to stand on a Foot differing with the present Establishment; and it is no Injustice to suspect those, who by any of these may be supposed to wish for, or be pleas'd with the Alteration.

Punishments and Sentences can only pass after positive Evidence in Fact, and so the Guilty alone can suffer; but Suspicions are grounded upon the Surface of Things, and are formed from a Judgment made on Mens Interests as well as Actions; and thus he who is by Principle a *Jacobite*, or a Roman Catholick, and so may be supposed to be in Interest oblig'd to pursue such a Design, may be justly suspected to pursue it, because all Men are supposed to pursue what is known to be their Interest.

Her Majesty therefore, who is a Princess of Native Tenderness, can by no means be charged with Cruelty, to the Persons of the Gentlemen confin'd; and if the Gentlemen themselves would be pleased to reflect on the Cruelty of the Design it self against the whole Island, which it would take up too much Room here to enlarge upon; how they would have dethron'd our Liberty, dissolv'd our Constitution, depos'd our Sovereign, and in short involv'd us all in Blood, Misery and Devastation: It requires a much

a much better Pen than mine to give you a lively Description of the Consequences of this Matter, at least so plain as to make you truly sensible of the thing at a Distance.

And indeed the Want of true Ideas formed in the Minds of our People of the things they must have suffer'd, and the Monsters hid in the Womb of a *French* Invasion, are the great Reasons, why the Clamours now raised at the Confinement, and other Usage of these Gentlemen, is so much carry'd on— Even just as it is the great Reason, why we are not sufficiently thankful to Almighty GOD for the Deliverance it self.

And what could the Government do less than secure the Persons of such Gentlemen, whom they might have Reason to apprehend were not their Friends; securing their Persons, if they are not Guilty, is the least Injury that could be done them in the Case of a common Calamity; for the Govern-

ment offers at nothing but a Tryal of its Friends; the Government does not pretend to judge of their Guilt, that must be determined by Law; in which I doubt not they will have Cause, whatever they thought before, to bless GOD for the Union, by which their Honour, Lives and Estates are no more at the Mercy of their private Enemies, but they will have a fair, legal, just and honourable Opportunity to vindicate themselves, have all Encouragement to clear themselves, and have their Exoneration as publick as their Misfortune— Perhaps every Body is not equally sensible of the Advantage they have by this; but I shall endeavour to make it plainer in my next, when I shall say something to the News we have of the Prisoners being sent for to *England*, and of which they make great Complaint here as an unreasonable Hardship.

MISCELLANEA.

IN all the Transactions of this great Affair in *Scotland*, it cannot be, but a Body may find out now and then a Tale to make you a little chearful; and tho' I own, had the *French* landed, we should have laugh'd, as they say, but on one Side of the Mouth; yet now it is all over, we may take a little more Latitude with the Thing.

And, First, who can help Smiling, when we hear the Language of some of our Beloved Friends the *Jacobites*, when the Probability of the Success began to encourage them to talk.

You need not be afraid of the King, he does not come with Revenge in his Thoughts, he will do you no Harm, he will pass by former Injuries, and give a general Oblivion; the worst of his Enemies shall receive no Damage from him.

Another Gentleman to his Tenants in the *North*—Now we shall have our King again, and we shall have brave Times in *Scotland*— *O but he is a Papist*, says One of the poor Men, and what will become of the Kirk? No, no, says the Laird, he will

turn Protestant, he is Young, and of a mild Temper, he will be prevail'd upon. *O but we are not sure of that*, says the poor Man again; no Matter, says my Landlord, if he should not, he engages he will preserve the *Scots Presbyterian* Kirk in its full Authority, there shall be no Alteration at all made in the Church Government; he comes with a Bible in one Hand, and a white Flag in the other; Truth in one Hand, and Peace in the other; you need not be afraid of him at all, he will make no Alteration in the least.

This leads me to tell you a good Story, which is really Matter of Fact, and pass'd on the same Occasion in the *West* of *Scotland*, during the Time of this Hurry.

An honest Minister in the *West* walking along the Street in the Town he liv'd in, observ'd two or three Gentlemen, whom he knew to be *Jacobites*, talking earnestly together; as he came near them, they call'd him to them, and ask'd him what News? — I know not, says the Minister, ye are most likely to hear News; Pray, what do you hear of the Invasion? Well, say the Gentlemen,